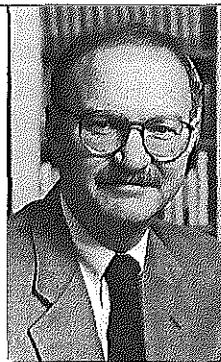


Douglas C. Bennett  
American Council of Learned Societies, New York

## The Internationalization of Scholarship and Scholarly Societies in the Humanities and Social Sciences\*

Bennett, D.C.: The internationalization of scholarship and scholarly societies in the humanities and social sciences. *Knowl. Org.* 23(1996)No.4, p. 193-198

The paper focusses on the practical issues of institutions and resources relating to a conference held in November 1994 on the topic, organized by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) which embraces the U.S. scholarly community in the humanities and social sciences. The results of statements of conference participants on the internationalization of its activities and on the internationalization of scholarship in their fields have been summarized here. (KO)



Dr. Bennett received his PhD in Political Science from Yale University in 1974. He has been Vice President of the American Council of Learned Societies since July 1994. His scholarly interests lie in public policy and political theory, particularly in normative aspects of transnational policy issues such as direct foreign investment and immigration.

It is a progress report from a particular, if useful vantage point: the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), which embraces the U.S. scholarly community in the humanities and social sciences.

These remarks draw on a conference we held in November, 1994 on this topic. Each learned society was asked to prepare a statement on the internationalization of its activities and on the internationalization of scholarship in its field. I have drawn freely on these in preparing my remarks, but of course the views expressed these evening are merely my own. (We published a selection of these statements as an *ACLS Occasional Paper*, which is available on request.)

### 1. Introduction

There is nothing new in the internationalization of scholarship; it has been an aspiration for centuries. Plato's academy was an international institution. During the Middle Ages, Islamic and Christian scholars shared texts and commentaries with one another. Benjamin Franklin sent moose bones to France to help settle long-standing questions about whether mammals in North America differed from those in Europe. The coming of the research ideal to the United States was very much indebted to a generation of scholars who studied in Germany. One of the key participants in the recent controversy about scientific integrity in a paper published in *Cell* is a woman who was born in Brazil, educated in Japan and employed in a lab in Europe before coming to MIT.

Someone once said: 'Scholars are people who look like foreigners in any country.' Certainly scholars inhabit a special realm of their own, one that does not respect national borders.

The issues in the internationalization of scholarship are merely practical ones. By and large they are issues having to do with institutions, with modes of travel and communication, with the adequacy of resources. And with these practical arrangements, national borders can be very important.

I want to acknowledge here that progress in the internationalization of scholarship also depends upon the strength of our aspirations and with whatever limitations our prejudices impose, but these are a topic for another evening.

In this paper I want to focus on the practical issues of institutions and resources. My remarks are a progress report on how we are doing toward realizing that aspiration towards the internationalization of scholarship.

The common images we have of scholars are solitary ones. We often picture a scholar working alone in a library, a lab. This is especially our conception in the humanities, but even scholars who work alone rely upon communities. They build upon the work of one another; they need comment and criticism, and they need organized settings where they can share their work with others.

If scholars need communities, communities need organization. Scholarly communities need educational institutions, for example. They need archives and libraries, they need learned societies and publishers, — and more. Each of these kinds of institutions has its own story in terms of achieving global reach.

I won't try to cover them all. In my remarks I want to focus upon learned societies, on programs for language training and exchanges, and on library and information resources. I then want to add a very few words about how this internationalization is affecting scholarship itself. Finally, I want to raise some questions about the future.

### 2. The Expanding Reach of Learned Societies

Thirteen learned societies joined together in 1919 to create the American Council of Learned Societies. Today we have 58 member societies and the number continues to grow. Our purpose (this is quoted from our Constitution) is the "advancement of humanistic studies in all fields of learning in the humanities and social sciences and the maintenance and strengthening of relations among the national societies devoted to such studies."

Note that our Constitution speaks of "national societies." Most of the learned societies which belong to ACLS were created in the past century and a half, and most were founded as national societies. (It is difficult to look up

societies in our Directory because so many are the American Society of this or the American Association of that.)

The very earliest learned societies—secular organizations of those with a serious concern for knowledge—are largely an invention of the Enlightenment. These earliest societies were:

- place-based
- gatherings across a range of professions of all learned people
- focused on the full breadth of fields of knowledge.

They were local societies because that was the geography which could be comfortably embraced in an ongoing series of activities. Many of these early learned societies had meeting halls; many had also cabinets or collections of valuable objects, gathered from distant places or times, which could be examined at first hand. Though quite transformed today, three of these earliest learned societies are members of ACLS. The American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia, founded 1743) and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (Boston, 1780) are now prestigious honorary societies whose reach is not just national but international. The American Antiquarian Society (Worcester, 1812) also has only honorary members, but today is principally a major independent research library.

Modern learned societies, ones founded after the U.S. Civil War, by contrast are:

- national
- networks of scholars and educators
- with professional interests in a single field or discipline.

That is, they are broader in geographical reach but narrower in two other ways: they draw in (for the most part) only professionals who are teachers and scholars, and they draw in only those with interest in a single defined field.

A large number of learned societies were founded between the Civil War and World War I. Founded during this period were (among others) virtually all of those in the disciplines which are included among the standard humanities and social science departments of colleges and universities. The learned societies founded after World War I add several additional kinds of fields, most notably those concerned with the arts, and those interdisciplinary societies concerned with particular areas of the world or with particular centuries or eras.

One of the primary purposes in forming the American Council of Learned Societies in 1919 was to provide a representative for the United States in the Union des Associations Internationales (UAI). That is, ACLS was formed in response to the aspiration for international reach. For more than 75 years, ACLS has played an important role in mediating the relation between scholarly communities in the United States and scholar communities in other countries. In addition to the UAI, the ACLS also represents the

United States in a variety of other formal and informal international gatherings.

Our member learned societies are growing beyond their national boundaries, however. Taking stock of this change was a primary purpose of the November, 1994 retreat. Three patterns of change—certainly not exclusive—are worth noting:

(1) In some fields, national learned societies in a number of countries have joined together to constitute an international learned society in the field. The national societies continue, as robustly as ever, but the international society also holds periodic meetings, may publish a journal, and perform other regular functions of a learned society. In 1994, 30 of our then 56 member learned societies could identify some kind of international learned society as an organization with which they were affiliated.

(2) A second kind of change: national learned societies are extending their own reach beyond national boundaries. For example, they are:

- inviting foreign scholars to their annual meetings,
- holding meetings abroad,
- attracting members from other countries (10, 20, even 30% in some cases),
- appointing foreign scholars to submit papers to journals or to serve on the editorial boards of journals,
- working with scholars in other countries to develop international curriculum materials, and
- taking an interest in conditions for scholarship in other countries (availability of journals, academic freedom, etc.).

(3) In a few cases, learned societies were started as societies with a reach beyond a single country. They may be headquartered in the United States and have a majority of members in this country, but the aspirations are broader from the beginning. Some have seen their natural reach as North America—or at least Canada and the United States. In a few cases, they were founded with fully international expectations.

‘Internationalization’ is today one of the most important frontiers for our member societies. They are exploring what this means, and not all proceeding in the same way, but virtually all mean to be engaged in the work of internationalizing their activities.

### 3. Language Training and Exchanges

Two traditional and critically important means for promoting the internationalization of scholarship in the humanities and social sciences have been language training and exchanges. We cannot have serious internationalization of scholars without opportunities for the possibility to learn a broad spectrum of world languages, and without opportunities for scholars to meet and work together face-to-face. Both are difficult for individual universities or learned societies to provide on their own, so both have

relied to an unusual extent on public provision.

Both language training and exchanges were given a distinct boost in the United States by World War II and its aftermath, and this country took on a new international role and realized its ignorance of much of the world. The U.S. government looked much more to scholars to take the lead in international understanding.

With *exchanges*, we created the Fulbright program in 1946. While there have been other exchanges, Fulbright has been the flagship, the exemplar for other programs, especially programs for scholars. Under its auspices, thousands of scholars in an array of fields, have studied and taught abroad. Thousands of others have come from abroad to study and teach in this country.

With *language training*, the flagship program has been Title VI of the National Defense Education Act, passed in 1958. Over the past several decades, Title VI has supported area centers and language training programs at universities across the U.S. Again, it has been joined by other, broadly similar programs for language learning.

Both exchanges and language programs are now facing a withdrawal of federal funding, in part because of the end of the Cold War, and in part because of a new political dynamic regarding the federal budget.

At the same time that institutions responsible for scholarship and education have grown more interested in the world beyond the U.S. and Western Europe, the U.S. public, or at least the public as it finds expression through the political process, has grown more focused on the United States. Exchanges and language learning programs remain valuable approaches for the internationalization of scholarship, and they must be provided for each new generation if we are to sustain the progress we have made; but at present their future is uncertain.

#### 4. Library and Information Resources

Another principal way the internationalization of scholarship has been moved along is by broadening and deepening the library and information resources available to scholars. Again, I want to focus here on the situation in the United States—certainly not the whole story, but a very important one.

And with the library and information resources available in the United States, I have some bad news and I have some good news. The bad news is very much real and in the present. The good news is just a possibility and only in the future. The bad news has to do with the rapid decline in acquisitions of foreign materials by U.S. scholarly libraries. The good news has to do with how the technologies of digital networks may provide possibilities for collaborative acquisition of such materials.

The budgets of research libraries have been under assault for quite some time. The assault has come from several directions at once: increases in the volume of what is published, increases in unit prices, unfavorable changes in exchange rates, and general pressure on university

budgets. Library collections budgets have been unable to keep pace. The consequences have been cancellations of journals and constriction of collections. What has been sacrificed? Among the most vulnerable targets have been foreign acquisitions.

Each library makes decisions based on the needs of its local users. But decisions that are rational on a local scale may wind up being irrational from a national or international perspective. In this case, as a consequence of local decisions, valuable materials are not being acquired by any library, a predicament with which many of you are familiar.

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL), in conjunction with the Association of American Universities (AAU), has played a particularly valuable role in charting this dramatic decline. They have also helped to identify the solution, and almost certainly it is the only possible solution. We need to share the work and expense of acquiring foreign-published materials among a large number of research libraries. And we need to make these materials broadly available to scholars everywhere by the use of digital networks.

ARL and AAU are sponsoring three pilot projects that are attempting to demonstrate how this strategy can work. One focuses on materials from Mexico and Argentina, one on German materials, and one on Japanese materials.

These projects are important for what they will accomplish in their own terms, but they are all the more important for leading the way towards more general cooperative strategies of library acquisitions. Almost certainly we are moving towards the beginning of a dramatic change in how we organize library and information resources around the world. The technologies of digital networks make this possible, but this technology is not the sole key to unlocking the future. We also need to work out how distant organizations will cooperate—will rely upon one another over the long run. We need to work out the sound finances of cooperative arrangements, and we need to work out the copyright arrangements.

Digital networks open the door to global, collaborative acquisition and use of library resources. They are also contributing to the internationalization of scholarship in many other ways. Let me just mention a few:

- staying in touch with colleagues on the other side of the world via e-mail, without concern for time zones,
- revising or editing documents in real time with colleagues at a great distance,
- holding virtual conferences, with participants spread across several countries, and
- teaching a class with students thousands of miles apart.

These are possibilities, but how will they become realities? Someone, some institution, has to build the capabilities to allow these uses. We are seeing a great many promising starts, but it will cost a great deal more to develop these into broadly available capabilities. Will these be as

available to scholars in Malawi and Malaysia as they will be in the United States and Germany? There is a significant danger we will create yet another global gap between haves and have nots.

## 5. Reorganization of Scholarly Fields

How are scholarly fields changing with the internationalization of scholarship? How is the study of literature changing? or the study of politics? or of art? This, too, is an evening's topic in its own right — or perhaps a whole conference. Let me simply draw a few conclusions from our November '94 retreat.

First, fields are becoming less insular. My own field, political science, is a good example. When I was in graduate school in the early 1970s, American politics was not only a separate sub-field but far and away the sub-field with the most practitioners. The politics of the United States were treated as a special case and studied in a different manner from politics in the rest of the world. Today, comparative politics is the sub-field with the most practitioners, and the politics in the United States are much more likely to be studied with the same methods and approaches as politics in other countries.

Or take literature. The Modern Language Association (MLA) is so named because when it was formed only Latin and Greek were studied in U.S. colleges and universities. The MLA was created to promote the study of all the others. But for many years, literature in French, German, Spanish and English, and works written in North America and Europe, all but eclipsed the study of literature in other languages and from other continents. Today, an MLA conference shows attention to literature on a much more international scale.

A second conclusion: the array of fields and disciplines is becoming more standardized across countries: the array of fields we have in the United States is becoming a de facto international standard. Is this a good thing? For some, yes. At the retreat, a scholar from the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies complained about universities in the Baltic States still being organized as they had been under Soviet domination. For the most part, however, this homogenization of how fields are organized is not a good thing. We are losing some richness in a plurality of approaches and perspectives.

My third conclusion has to do with interdisciplinarity, something we actively promote at ACLS. If we ask: is increased internationalization of scholarship leading to greater interdisciplinarity? I do not think we can say yes; we cannot conclude that the two are naturally linked. Much of the work of internationalization is being done along disciplinary lines.

On the other hand, promoting the internationalization of scholarship via a particular kind of interdisciplinary approach has been a concern of ACLS for more than four decades: we have been nurturing the birth and development of 'area studies.' Much of this work we have done

jointly in conjunction with the Social Science Research Council. Over the past two years SSRC and ACLS have been taking stock of where we are in this effort to promote interdisciplinary area studies. Here are a few conclusions from that stock taking:

- We recognize the coming to maturity of area studies fields. Area studies centers have been created on university campuses. A variety of area studies programs have been adopted at both graduate and undergraduate levels. Learned societies in the area studies fields have been formed, and over the past twenty years they have come to be important members of ACLS. Area studies journals have become established and respected publications.
- Despite the maturity of area studies fields, we note the fragility of what has been accomplished. Area studies fields are 'programs' not departments at universities. Faculty lines tend to be dedicated to departments not programs. When cutbacks come, departmental contributions to area studies programs can be among the first eliminations.
- We note the renewed importance of culture, religion, and national and ethnic identity in shaping human affairs. (Or perhaps it is not 'renewed importance' at all; perhaps the importance of these things was just obscured by the Cold War). We need to find ways to be sure that area studies knowledge is looked to, and that it makes a contribution both within and beyond the academy.
- We need to sustain and strengthen what we have begun. Beyond this, the frontier in research appears to be stimulating scholarship that crosses the boundaries of area studies regions: work that is comparative, or work that charts how global forces have varied local consequences because of how they are refracted through different cultures.

We are dedicating ourselves to fresh efforts to promote area studies.

## 6. What will shape the future?

What will shape the future? I do not possess a particularly good crystal ball. I do not have much sense of what the future will bring. But I do think I know some of the questions that are before us. I would like to close by sketching three of them.

### 6.1 What organizations will serve our needs for international scholarship?

I have already said that learned societies will do so. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that most of the organizations and institutions which support scholarship today are only a little more than a century or a century and a quarter old. The university, the learned society, the library, the publisher: all these institutions were invented or dramatically reshaped in the late nineteenth century. They were

shaped to serve the emerging needs of education and scholarship for a society then becoming much more reliant on education and knowledge.

They have served us well, and decades ago we worked out the basic routines by which these institutions work with one another. All of these institutions are now in the midst of increasingly rapid change. My point is not just that each is changing, nor that they need to find new ways to cooperate. Both are true. My point is rather that we may well see wholly new institutions — hybrid forms — that look quite different. Should libraries now be repositories of original materials, from which users around the globe can draw on demand? If so, either libraries or their users will have taken on some of the functions of publishers. Other possibilities could be offered. We are already seeing unusual new partnerships among libraries, publishers, learned societies and universities.

What organizations will serve well the needs of international scholarship? Perhaps not the current ones; we need to entertain that possibility. Institutions are created by human ingenuity. We are now at a point where we need further ingenuity — and vision — to see what configuration of institutions will serve us best in the future.

## 6.2 Who will dominate the digital future?

I have already touched on how the technologies of digital networks open the door to exciting possibilities for international scholarship. But this suggests another question: whose *interests* will be served best by these technologies? The main issues here arise outside the world of scholarship. We are all watching with interest the struggles among telephone companies, cable operators, publishers, movie studios, and television networks for dominance in the world of ‘infotainment.’ Surely the world of scholarship will be affected by this clash of Microsoft, Disney, Time-Warner, Viacom and other titans. But how?

One key question — perhaps *the* key — involves intellectual property. What rules will guide copyright in this digital, networked world? The success of the three AAU/ARL pilot projects depends in part on their finding affordable ways for libraries to share materials without violating copyright. The success of wider cooperative strategies depends on this as well. The technologies of digital networks render incoherent or strange many familiar doctrines of copyright law. What becomes of “fair use” or “first sale” in a digital age? These same technologies impel us to reconcile important differences among copyright laws in different countries. We are in the midst of working out new international understandings.

In this regard, I want to offer one other opinion, perhaps controversial. If these new understandings do not provide special arrangements for scholarship and education, I believe our needs will not be well served. Rules designed to serve prime time television or mass market movies will not serve well the needs of scholarship. In the present policy debate over intellectual property, the needs of scholars are not easily finding recognition.

In thinking about who will dominate the digital future, I want to mention an exciting undertaking in which ACLS is involved with several dozen other non-profit organizations, representing museums, libraries, archives, schools and universities. Together we have created NINCH, the National Initiative for a Networked Cultural Heritage. NINCH will help see that the full riches of our national cultural heritage find their way into digital form. (And we mean ‘national cultural heritage’ as broadly as we can imagine.) NINCH will be a forum for discussion of issues of standards, common protocols, copyright. It will identify projects that need to be started, and help find someone to carry them forward.

Note that this is *a national* initiative. We expect NINCH will work with similar organizations in other countries to see that the full cultural resources of all human communities find their way into digital form. Who will dominate the digital future? I doubt the organizations of scholarship will. But we have an important role to play, and we must find a way to have our needs respected.

## 6.3 How much will we invest in knowledge?

My third question is the largest of all. I don’t mean how much will those of us in this room invest in knowledge, or even all the world of scholarship and education. I mean how much will our *society* invest in knowledge?

All of you know that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) was dramatically cut in its funding by the current Congress. So, too, was the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). We faced down the real possibility of the two endowments being eliminated altogether, but these cuts are causing serious harm to scholarship and creativity.

The assault on NEH and NEA has been so strong that I think there is a tendency in the arts and humanities and social sciences to think we are being singled out for punishment. And perhaps we are, to a degree. But we also need to notice that our society is withdrawing funding for all forms of organized intelligence. Federal funding for science is no longer on the increase, and is now being cut. State governments are cutting back their support for higher education institutions. Corporations are cutting their research and development budgets. And so forth.

For those of us who believe that knowledge must certainly play an increasingly important role in the future, for those of us who believe knowledge must play an evermore central role in human affairs, this is peculiar and troubling. Is the current withdrawal of support for organized intelligence just a pause? or is it a long term trend? And what has given rise to this withdrawal of support?

We need not worry that over the very long term that scholarship will continue to become more fully international. Curiosity and wonder and the deep desire to understand one another make this as close to a certainty as anything in human affairs. What is unclear are only the pace and the path.

I have noted this evening that the progress of interna-

tionalizing scholarship has relied to a large extent on what public policy has made possible. We rely on the institutions we create for ourselves, like learned societies; but we must also rely on public support. In the past, public policy has opened some doors, and closed others. What will be the partnership of politics and scholarship in the future?

So my final question, the one I leave you with, is how much will we invest in knowledge? The future of the internationalization of scholarship depends very much on the answer to this question.

\* Address to the International Society of Knowledge Organization during its 4th International ISKO Conference, given at the U.S. Supreme Court, Washington, D.C., July 16, 1996.

#### ACLS Member Societies

African Studies Association (1957)  
 American Academy of Arts and Sciences (1780)  
 American Academy of Religion (1909)  
 American Anthropological Association (1902)  
 American Antiquarian Society (1812)  
 American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies (1948)  
 American Comparative Literature Association (1960)  
 American Dialect Society (1889)  
 American Economic Association (1885)  
 American Folklore Society (1888)  
 American Historical Association (1884)  
 American Musicological Society (1934)  
 American Numismatic Society (1858)  
 American Oriental Society (1842)  
 American Philological Association (1869)  
 American Philosophical Association (1900)  
 American Philosophical Society (1743)  
 American Political Science Association (1903)

American Psychological Association (1892)  
 American Society for Aesthetics (1942)  
 American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies (1969)  
 American Society for Legal History (1956)  
 American Society for Theatre Research (1956)  
 American Society of Comparative Law (1951)  
 American Society of International Law (1906)  
 American Sociological Association (1905)  
 American Studies Association (1950)  
 Archaeological Institute of America (1879)  
 Association for Asian Studies (1941)  
 Association for Jewish Studies (1969)  
 Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (1968)  
 Association of American Geographers (1904)  
 Association of American Law Schools (1900)  
 Bibliographical Society of America (1904)  
 College Art Association (1912)  
 Dictionary Society of North America (1975)  
 Economic History Association (1940)  
 German Studies Association (1976)  
 Hispanic Society of America (1904)  
 History of Science Society (1924)  
 Latin American Studies Association (1966)  
 Linguistic Society of America (1924)  
 Medieval Academy of America (1925)  
 Metaphysical Society of America (1950)  
 Middle East Studies Association (1966)  
 Modern Language Association (1883)  
 Organization of American Historians (1907)  
 Renaissance Society of America (1954)  
 Sixteenth Century Studies Conference (1970)  
 Society for Cinema Studies (1959)  
 Society for Ethnomusicology (1955)  
 Society for French Historical Studies (1956)  
 Society for the History of Technology (1958)  
 Society of Architectural Historians (1940)  
 Society of Biblical Literature (1880)  
 Sonneck Society of American Music (1983)

Continued from p. 226

#### Languages and the Media

An international conference and exhibition entitled Languages and the Media was held from Nov. 21-23, 1996 at Berlin under the patronage of Mr. Daniel Tarschys, Secretary General of the Council of Europe. It had the support of eleven institutions such as FIT, the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs, the European Media Institute, the European Society for Translation Studies.

The Keynote address was delivered by Prof. José Lambert from the Cera Chair of Translation in Leuven, Belgium. 35 papers were presented in the following seven sessions: Language Policy, Language Transfer (Content) - Dubbing, The Impact of Media on Language - Language Transfer (Content) - Subtitling, Technology in Language Transfer - Training for the Media, and The User's View: Corporate Translation Policy. The closing remarks were made on behalf of the organizers by Geoffrey Kingscott, Praetorius Ltd., UK. For further information turn to: Dr. Hanna Vondrácková, ICEF/Sprachen & Medien, Dvořetky 501/2998, 100 00 Praha 10, CR.

#### IFCS-96. Data Science, Classification and related Methods, Japan, March 1996

The fifth conference of the International Federation of Classification Societies on the above title was held on March 27-30, 1996 in Kobe, Japan. Two volumes of the - partly - extended abstracts of some 200 papers have been published in two volumes together 550 pages; they are available from Prof. Dr. OHSUMI, The Institute of Statistical Mathematics, National Inter-University Institute, 4-6-7 Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106, Japan. Papers of the 10 invited lectures included: A.D. GORDON: Cluster Validation. - F.-J. LAPOINTE: To validate and how to validate? that is the real question. - Ch. HAYASHI: What is data science? - Fundamental concepts and heuristic examples. - W.J. HEISER: Fitting graphs and trees with multidimensional scaling methods. - H.H. BOCK: Probabilistic aspects in classification. - L. HUBERT, Ph. ARABIE: The approximation of one or two-mode proximity matrices by sums of order-constrained matrices. - J.Ch. LEE: Statistics, data analysis and classification in Korea - past, present and future. - F.C. NICOLAU: Some trends in the classification of variables. - K. JAJUGA: Classification and data analysis in finance. - J.-P. RASSON: Convexity methods in classification.

Cont'd on p.205